Cookies and Eggo Waffles by orphan_account

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Brief mention of body horror, Gen, Post-Finale

Language: English

Characters: Eleven (Stranger Things), Jim "Chief" Hopper

Status: Completed Published: 2016-08-28 Updated: 2016-08-28

Packaged: 2022-03-31 22:53:44 Rating: General Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 1 Words: 1,206

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

What was Eleven up to during that one month time skip?

Cookies and Eggo Waffles

Food was hard to come by in the upside down. At first, Eleven had to eat the slimy, slithering things that lived there. She didn't think of escaping during that time, because she only had enough energy to feebly push the monsters away when they wandered too close. Eventually, she was able to build up her strength, and the monsters learned to leave her alone. She wandered about this gloomy distortion of Hawkins, trying to learn what she could about her new home. On the other side, lights flickered wherever she went, unnoticed by the people of the town.

The two dimensions were closer than anyone knew, the walls between them as thin as her finger in some places. Sometimes she went into the basement where, in the other place, Mike and his friends were playing Dungeons and Dragons. If she concentrated she could hear their voices, too quiet to understand. Listening in with her powers just made her sad, and was difficult without an isolation tank, so she didn't do that often. She avoided the forest, where the victims rested, and she avoided the laboratory, where the bad men worked. They would probably come from there, if they found a way in. Sometimes she expected Papa to appear out of the darkness, his face illuminated inside of a hazmat suit, with his searching eyes and calculated smile

The spores that floated in the air made it difficult to breathe and weakened her somewhat, but their impact on her was gradual. She tried to make them skirt her face with telepathy, but doing this all the time was draining. The main thing, it seemed, was to keep those nasty, snake-like things outside of her. They had gotten deep inside the guts of the other humans and sucked away their energy, and whenever she thought of what had happened to Barbara, she gagged. Before eating anything in this place she thoroughly smashed and cooked it. The scent of death and burning flesh attracted the monster, but she sat with her back to the smoke, ready to counter it.

During the first week or so, she had been resigned to living out the rest of her life there. As she recovered, however, she regained full use of her powers and began looking for a way to escape. In the places

where the border was thinnest she pushed, hoping against reason that she would be able to simply pass through without damaging it, but it wouldn't give. When she had closed the portal and dragged the monster back to its world with her, all the other exits had been closed off as well.

It seemed that the only option was to create another portal, and she couldn't do that to the people of Hawkins again.

Later that month, she went back to the forest. By this time the bodies had been eaten or had decomposed, but she could tell where they had been. To distract herself, she let her mind wander to the other forest. Snow was falling thickly, but it was new snow and hadn't piled up yet. There was one man trekking through the storm, a hand raised to cover his face. The beam of a flashlight swept the ground in front of him. With a start, she recognized him. What was he doing out here?

"Hopper!" she called.

Hopper stopped.

"Eleven?"

"Yes."

"Hello?"

"I'm here."

"Anyone there?"

He frowned, pointed the flashlight everywhere, and continued on. Eleven made a noise of frustration and waved her hand, making his flashlight flicker rapidly. He paused again.

"Blink once for yes, twice for no. Okay?"

Blink.

"Do you know Morse code?"

Blink, blink.

"Too bad. Are you in the, what did you call it, the upside down?"

Blink.

"Have you found a way out?"

Blink, blink.

"If there's a way to get you out without getting anyone else hurt, I'd like to try, but you need to be careful. Those people are still looking for you," he sighed. "And they're watching me, too. Can you meet me here again, tomorrow?"

Blink.

"Good."

He left the clearing. Eleven opened her eyes, and the upside down came back into focus. The monster was approaching her, cautious but still malevolent. She shoved it into a tree and took off in the opposite direction.

Despite her reservations, she began experimenting with making tears in the boundary between worlds, tiny holes that she closed immediately. The first portal's creation had been uncontrolled, when she was so panicked that she didn't know what she was doing, so maybe this time it wouldn't have the effects that she feared. The next day, she reached out to a thin section and made a straight cut in the fabric, just tall enough to duck through. She felt along the gap with her fingers, pushed the edges apart, and closed it up right away on the other side. The edges of the tear flowed back together, more slowly than she would have liked, and she poked and prodded the area around it until she was satisfied that not a speck of gloom was visible. For a minute she watched it, tense, prepared to fight anything that came out. The monster approached the place where the gap had been, inspected it, and left. She let out a sigh of relief.

"You aren't looking too good, kid," said a voice behind her.

She turned around and saw that Hopper was waiting for her beyond the clearing. He was right; she was covered in grime, her hair was matted, and her face was gaunt. When he reached her he handed her a package, wrapped in a blanket, and watched with concern as she opened it. Inside was easy to carry food, granola bars and packets of dried fruit.

"This should last you a while," he said. "I'll try to come back whenever I can to bring you more. You're safer in that other place right now, so you should hide out in there for a bit longer."

Eleven frowned, but nodded. She didn't know what Papa would make her do if he found out that she could now slip between dimensions at will.

"I wish that I knew how to make this easier for you," he said with a shake of his head. "How are you breathing in there, anyway?"

It was snowing lightly, so she gestured and made the flakes stop before they hit them. He reached out of the dome that she had created and felt the snow hit his hand.

"I know that this had been working for you so far, but pop out every once in a while for fresh air, okay?"

"Okay."

The tear was easier to go in and out of every time, and now reacted to her intentions almost automatically. On Christmas she emerged through the gap into the bitterest cold yet, although it wasn't so bad with her coat on, which Hopper had left on his second visit. When she opened the container she smiled, beholding his greatest gift yet: a packet of Eggo waffles. Mike must have told him. She glanced around on the off chance that he was still nearby, took the Eggos and the cookies, and went back through the gap.

Author's Note:

I wrote this while trying to sort out my thoughts on the finale, so I'd love it if people left comments about their own theories.